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**Congress of the United States**

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0906

February 2, 2005

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## COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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## COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

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HEALTH

AIR FORCE CAUCUS, CO-CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Michael Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEB - 3 2005

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary98-120  
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Dear Chairman Powell:

It is my understanding that you are considering ruling on the issue of full multicast must-carry rights for broadcasters in digital television in the upcoming weeks.

During my time on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, I have worked extensively with broadcasters and the cable industry on these complex and controversial issues. My experience with local broadcasters has led me to expressly support reasonable must-carry and multicast rights, because I believe that these allow independent broadcasters throughout my state and the country to provide diverse programming that might not otherwise be available. Our nation's cable companies provide the valuable spectrum needed and I believe they are providing a critical public service. While I support must-carry rights for broadcasters, I do remain sensitive to the use of government mandates that may overburden our cable systems.

In order to maintain this diversity of programming that the original must-carry legislation was designed to promote and which I hope continues in the age of digital television, I respectfully ask that the Commission consider issuing a ruling which provides as much of an adequate and proportionate voice for broadcasters on digital cable systems as possible.

The Commission has my full confidence that it can strike a fair and equitable balance between broadcasters and the cable industry, and I look forward to hearing from you on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Cliff Stearns

United States Representative

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